

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /081 W
----- 106118

R 110931Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9384

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 0351

DEPT PASS OTHER POSTS AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SU

SUBJECT: FACTORS BEHIND SUDANESE GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

REF: KHARTOUM 0248

BEGIN SUMMARY. RECENT MAJOR SUDANESE GOVERNMENT RE-
ORGANIZATION REFLECTS NIMEIRI'S IMPATIENT AND HIGHLY
PERSONAL RULE. IT ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE OPENED NEW PHASE
IN SUDANESE POLITICAL IN-FIGHTING, OUTCOME OF WHICH
LIKELY DEPEND ON NIMEIRI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AMBITIOUS,
EX-PARATROOPER, HERETOFORE LOYAL MAJOR ABUL GASSIM
IBRAHIM. END SUMMARY.

1. INFO DEVELOPED SUBSEQUENT SUBMISSION REFTTEL MAKES
INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT JANUARY 25 GOVERNMENT REORGANI-

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ZATION SHOULD BE VIEWED AS OPENING MOVE IN NEW ROUND

COMPLEX MANEUVERING INVOLVING PRESIDENT NIMEIRI AND HIS CHIEF ASSOCIATES, POSSIBLY INCLUDING SSU DEPSEC GEN AND MINAG MAJOR ABUL GASSIM MUHAMMED IBRAHIM. WHILE INITIATIVE SSU HIERARCHS IN ASSEMBLY ON NILE VALLEY CONCESSION ISSUE WAS CLEARLY RESPONSIBLE FOR TIMING MINFIN MANSOUR'S DOWNFALL, SWEEPING CABINET CHANGES ANNOUNCED IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER SUGGEST EFFORT ON PRESIDENT'S PART TO MAINTAIN AND BUTTRESS HIS PERSONAL POWER AGAINST MOUNTING INDEPENDENCE OF OPPORTUNIST ELEMENTS WHO HAVE HAD KEY ROLES IN SSU AND PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY. SIXTY-FOUR DOLLAR QUESTION IS WHETHER, AS SOME BELIEVE, THESE ELEMENTS ACTED WITH SUPPORT OF MAJOR IBRAHIM OR WHETHER LATTER REMAINS NIMEIRI'S LOYAL ASSOCIATE. PRESIDENT HAS MADE APPOINTMENTS IN THREE KEY AREAS WHICH MAY BUTTRESS HIS POSITION AGAINST ANY NEW CHALLENGES TO HIS AUTHORITY.

2. SSU: KEY ROLE IN SSU HAS BEEN PLAYED, NOT BY POLITBURO, BUT BY DEPSEC GEN IBRAHIM AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES BADR EL-DIN SULEIMAN AND AHMED ABDEL HALIM. WHILE SULEIMAN AND HALIM RETAIN THEIR SSU TITLES ALONG WITH THEIR RECENT CABINET APPOINTMENTS, THEIR LONG-TERM PARTY ROLES MAY HAVE BEEN CIRCUMSCRIBED. SULEIMAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IDEOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES HAVE SEEMINGLY BEEN TRANSFERRED TO NEWLY NAMED ASSISTANT SECRETARY JAAFAR BAKHEIT. SULEIMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR SSU ORGANIZATION HAS SIMILARLY BEEN SHIFTED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY OMAR AL-HAJ MUSA WHO HAS ALSO BEEN CHARGED WITH SUPERVISION OFFICE OF SECRETARY GENERAL. HALIM'S FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE NOT BEEN CHANGED, BUT A NEW HEAD HAS BEEN NAMED FOR HIS YOUTH COMMITTEE (DR. ABDULLAH AHMED QALANDAR) WHO HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH NIMEIRI AT LEAST SINCE 1969. WITH BAKHEIT AND MUSA GENERALLY REGARDED AS NIMEIRI MEN, RECENT SSU CHANGES ARGUABLY WERE INTENDED TO CONTROL SULEIMAN AND HALIM AND COULD REFLECT MOVE TO CURB SSU FREEWHEELING UNDER AMBITIOUS MAJOR IBRAHIM.

3. PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY: THOUGH IN NO REAL SENSE A LOCUS OF POWER, ASSEMBLY DID PRECIPITATE CHANGES BY ITS ACTION AGAINST EX-MINFIN MANSOUR. HOWEVER HAPPY NIMEIRI MAY HAVE BEEN TO HAVE EXCUSE TO DROP THIS

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POWERFUL, INDEPENDENT-MINDED MINISTER, HE SHREW ENOUGH TO SEE HOW EMBARRASSING SIMILAR INDEPENDENT ACTION ON PART ASSEMBLY COULD BE IN FUTURE. PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE OF MOVES OF SULEIMAN AND HALIM COULD THUS WELL BE NOT IN THEIR APPOINTMENT AS MINISTERS BUT THEIR REMOVAL FROM KEY ASSEMBLY JOBS AS "WHIP" AND "LEADER" RESPECTIVELY, AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY MOHAMMED HASHIM AWAD (BELIEVED LONGTIME FRIEND OF BAKHEIT)

AND BAKHEIT HIMSELF. UNDER PECULIAR ASSEMBLY RULES, "WHIP" IS CHARGED WITH CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT POSITIONS, WHILE LEADER DEFENDS THEM. NIMEIRI MAY WELL HOPE AWAD/BAKHEIT DUO WILL WORK SMOOTHLY TO PREVENT EMBARRASSING DISCUSSION GOS POLICIES AND PERSONALITIES IN FUTURE.

4. CABINET: SULEIMAN, HALIM AND NEW MINISTER YOUTH AND SPORTS MAJ. ZEIN AL-ABDIN ABDEL GADIR(EX-PARATROOPER) ARE BELIEVED TO BE CLOSE TO MAJOR IBRAHIM BUT WE WONDER WHETHER THIS SHOULD BE TAKEN AS PROOF THAT LATTER'S POSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED. AS ALREADY INDICATED, SULEIMAN AND HALIM MAY HAVE HAD WINGS CLIPPED IN OTHER AREAS AND NONE OF THREE HAS MAJOR, POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT MINISTRY. WHEN THESE APPOINTMENTS ARE BALANCED AGAINST THOSE OF BAGHIR (INTERIOR), BIHEIRI (FINANCE) AND KARRAR (LOCAL GOVERNMENT) IT APPEARS NIMEIRI'S PRIMARY AIM WAS TO BUTTRESS HIS OWN PERSONAL POSITION, VIS-A-VIS NOT ONLY CABINET BUT ALSO SSU AND PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY. THIS VIEW IS STRENGTHENED BY APPOINTMENT ABDALLAH AL-HASSAN AL-KHIDIR AS SEC GEN PRESIDENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH EXECUTIVE AND CABINET AFFAIRS. NIMEIRI HAS HERETOFORE PRESERVED FICTION OF SEPARATE CABINET OFFICE WITH HIMSELF AS DE FACTO PRIME MINISTER.

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H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 /081 W
----- 107645

R 110931Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
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DEPT PASS OTHER POSTS AS APPROPRIATE

5. OTHER CHANGES RUMORED. AS INDICATED REFTEL, ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES SEEM CERTAIN, PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY SPEAKER RASHID AL-TAHIR (WHO LEFT KHARTOUM FEB 9 FOR OFFICIAL VISITS UK AND YUGOSLAVIA WHERE HE WILL BE JOINED BY BAKHEIT) IS WIDELY EXPECTED TO BE NAMED FOREIGN MINISTER. HIS RUMORED REPLACEMENT AT ASSEMBLY POST IS BABIKER AWADALLAH, EX-CHIEF JUSTICE AND ONLY CIVILIAN RCC MEMBER, WHO HAS LEFTIST AND PRO-EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND AND HAS BEEN LIVING IN EGYPT.

6. OUTLOOK. RECENT REORGANIZATION AND PROSPECTIVE FURTHER CHANGES INDICATE THAT REGIME HAS MOVED IN SOMEWHAT LEFRWARD AND MORE PRO-ARAB DIRECTION. THEY DO NOT IN OUR VIEW SUGGEST THAT NIMEIRI HIMSELF DOES NOT STILL REMAIN IN CHARGE. BUT WE THINK THEY DO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE SEEKING REASSERT HIS AUTHORITY NOT ONLY VIS-A-VIS
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DISMISSED OR DEMOTED SENIOR MINISTERS BUT ALSO AGAINST A GROUP OF SSU OPPORTUNISTS WHO MIGHT HAVE HOPED, AND CONCEIVABLY STILL HOPE, TO ACQUIRE MORE POWER FOR THEMSELVES AT HIS EXPENSE. NIMEIRI HAS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND INSOMNIA AND IS UNLIKELY TO LIVE TO A RIPE OLD AGE. HIS COLLEAGUES NO DOUBT HAVE TO THINK OF THEIR FUTURE IN A SUCCESSOR REGIME. WE SPECULATE THAT, WHILE MAJOR IBRAHIM MAY WELL BE WILLING TO CONTINUE TO SERVE UNDER NIMEIRI, HE MIGHT NOT BE WILLING TO DO SO UNDER BAGHIR, WHO WOULD PROBABLY SUCCEED TO PRESIDENCY. MEANWHILE, WE HEAR MORE OPEN CRITICISM OF NIMEIRI FROM LOCAL INTEL-LIGENTISIA AND TECHNOCRATS, NO DOUBT REFLECTING DISPLEASURE WITH DOWNGRADING THIS ELEMENT IN HIS REGIME. WHILE PRESIDENT'S BASE OF SUPPORT HAS THUS NARROWED SOMEWHAT, THIS MAY WELL REFLECT ATTITUDES IN KHARTOUM RATHER THAN COUNTRYSIDE AND CIVILIAN ELEMENT IN ANY CASE DISPOSES OF LITTLE REAL POWER. AS FAR AS WE AWARE ARMY STILL ACCEPTS PRESENT REGIME AND NIMEIRI HAS GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO CONFIRM THAT HE INTENDS REMAIN MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (KHARTOUM 0322). OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLOITATION BY EXILED OLD-LINE POLITICOES THUS STILL SEEM SMALL. ALL OF FOREGOING SUPPORTS OUR BASIC ASSESSMENT THAT, WHILE NIMEIRI HAS JUST GIVEN HIGHLY VISILBE ILLUSTRATION OF HIS PERSONAL RULE, NEW PHASE IN SUDANESE POLITICAL INTRIGUE

HAS OPENED, OUTCOME OF WHICH IS LIKELY TO DEPEND
ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NIMEIRI AND HIS CONTROVERSIAL,
AMBITIOUS BUT HERETOFORE LOYAL SUBORDINATE, ABUL GASSIM
IBRAHIM. IN THIS CONNECTION, PRESS HAS ANNOUNCED THERE
WILL BE SPECIAL MEETING SSU POLITBURO FEB 13 AND SSU CENTRAL
COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SUMMONED FOR MARCH 7.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL LEADERS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KHARTO00351
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750049-0441
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750254/aaaabwpe.tel
Line Count: 230
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 KHARTOUM 0248
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <10 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FACTORS BEHIND SUDANESE GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION
TAGS: PINT, SU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006